

"HOUSE AS A SYMBOL OF SELF"
EXAMINATION OF ITS IMPACT ON URBAN MASS HOUSING

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Department of Architecture,
University of Moratuwa, as a partial fulfillment of requirement for the
Degree of Master of Science in Architecture
and for the
Royal Institute of British Architects for the RIBA part II

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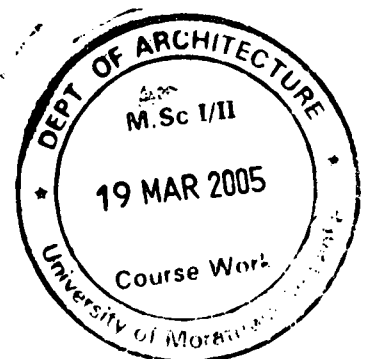
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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the following persons, whose assistance during the study is greatly appreciated.

Vidura Sri Nammuni, Head of the Dept, Department of Architecture, University of Moratuwa for the valuable guidance.

Prof. Samitha Manawadu, My dissertation Supervisor for the support and inspiration extended to me, in imparting his enrich experiences on the subject and guiding me. I wish to extend my deep appreciation and gratitude to him for directing many aspects of this study, his patience and precious time expended in this respect. Dr. Upenra Rajapaksha, Architect Prasanna Kulathilaka for their guidance, invaluable comments and support.

Also Aishani, Rasika, Bathika, Chaminda and Shabika, for being my source of strength and encouragement in numerous ways. Asanga, Kalpani, Chandana, Samantha, Saman, Sudesh, Mohan and Sumith for accompanied me.

My Father, Mother and Sister for all their rentless support, tolerance and above all for the love extended to me at all difficult time.

Finally I must express my heartfelt thanks to the persons who exhibits their housing units without any hesitation and expressing their ideas about personalization of the given environment, provided valuable insights to me.

A thank you to all others helped me out and assisted me at least in thought.

ABSTRACT

Human is an identified individual living creature in the existing world. The mental notion of a man has about its physical, psychological and social attributes, as well as its attitudes, beliefs and ideas, express him or her self in an existing society.

The most socialist built-form is the house which entails the maintenance of balance between an individual's inner and outer self which he becomes a part of it. People have to satisfy their physical needs as well as their psychological needs for survival.

The macro context also is a factor that defines a habitable space. This situation generates an impact on "Self" and "House". The struggle to overcome the impact of self Vs house may create a chaotic condition of the man-made environment. Architecture has been developed out of the process of man's inner self to fulfill his or her psychological comfort.

Thus,

Architecture is the process and the product of human habitation.

Habraken.N.J. (1983)



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INTRODUCTION

i. Topic Explanation

Man is known as a social animal, That is because he cannot survive without any social interactions. But it is realistic to understand that a person is an individual to the way of his thinking process. There it creates a 'self'. One's self is important to make an effective communication among others.

A self is not static; it is learned, organized and dynamic according to their experiences, aspirations, intellectual capacity and his social accepted area.

The so called "self-expression" can be perceived through a person's physical body and his surrounding built environment fusion of his psychological aspects. This evolves his living environment or "Home".

A person's house or so-called "home" could be identified as the physical manifestation of the self. That implies the sense of privacy; sense of identity, sense of territoriality and sense of belongingness. These are the essences of a self expression.

While understanding the above facts, in to account a house can entail a multiplicity of social, cultural, political, economical, climatic and technological aspects.

But currently, with the changing economic scenario a host of commercialized development, yet urbanization and globalization could be seen in every nook of corner. So everything is commodification including the house too. Therefore house becomes a commodity, produce in mass scale like cars, etc., with considering time, cost, value, etc...

This phenomena is discussed in detail titled as "house as a symbol of self" and intends to do an examination of the impact on mass housing with selected case studies in the urban context.

ii. Observation

Rapid urbanization is a process which has centralized a bulk of population in the urban context. Therefore the migration of rural population to the urban context took place in a short period of time. This aroused accommodation problem. Providing accommodation facilities was an essential need and the state involved to provide mass scale housing.

Basically design approaches were based on certain economic class or job functions so their attitude, beliefs and customs thoughts are common. The result is proto type housing units and in some situations these houses were built as high-rise apartments due to scarcity of land.

These design approaches of mass housing, however restricted the opportunities of a persons expression of self. So the forgot or understand the personal requirements and the individuals perception of a person, were forgotten and this persuaded people to personalise their housing unit by doing additions or alterations to their housing unit.



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This situation has become a chaotic or a missing sense of unity of a housing scheme as well as in the urban character.

iii. Scope and Limitations

The intention of the study is to examine house as a symbol of self impact on mass housing. Its primary concern on this respect is to find the psychological needs of the family and how they are reflected in the physical form.

Senses of identity or personality, privacy & security, territoriality and belongingness have been considered as those needs which give rise to symbolise the self of a person. Their manifestation is related to the layout, external appearance, and internal arrangement of houses. The above facts would be mainly considered in the examination of the study.

Symbol of self as it implies roots down to the individual itself and even within a family, there can be significant variations of personal preferences which may reflect

physically within the house. The family will be taken as a singular entity and it will not analyze the individual temperaments of its members.

A single housing unit can be changed during different time periods, because a person's self is dynamic. This may symbolise the self as dynamic. This may symbolise the self in different ways accordingly. But the study has been limited to find the symbolising of self only in a particular time period.

The personal choices and the degree of psychological needs are bounded with factors such as socio-cultural, socio-economical, socio-political, geographical factors etc. but these factors are not deeply taken in to a detail study so as to limit the study area.

The study will discuss the need to express self in housing as a global phenomenon in establishing its theoretical framework. However, its major emphasis is given to the Sri Lankan situation in which the case studies will be selected for detailed examination of House as a symbol of self.



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iv. Method of Study

The study will be an overview of the house as a symbol of self, with an examination of the impacts on urban mass housing. The study will be formulated on a sociological basis. How people had responded to express themselves in different housing situations with their social entities will be considered. The concept of self and the psychological aspects will be discussed in a theoretical base. A case study approach has been adopted as the methodology of the study. The entire study includes three chapters. The chapters are explained briefly as follows.

At the early stages the study will focus to housing, its related issues in global perspective, effect of changing such issues on housing and emerge the mass housing through that and its evolution in Sri Lankan context with certain problems.

At the next stage self, its realm and its innate needs. Then study the self –space relationship from primitive spaces to architectural spaces with attributes. So house becomes collection of architectural space with its symbolic connections and related psychological needs in visualising house as a symbol of self.

Finally through the selected case studies will be scrutinised as to examine how self is impact on mass housing in terms of psychological needs; Identity or personality , privacy, Territoriality and belongingness.

In order to do the study, direct observation, questionnaires are used to find practical data while literature and photography survey will justify the findings when the explanations are necessary areas.

